

Lincoln Police Department

Community Policing Projects

Community Police Teams

Lincoln's uniformed police force is divided into five community police teams, each commanded by a captain. All uniformed patrol personnel of the department are assigned to one of the five geographic teams. The Northwest, Center, Southwest, Northeast, and Southeast teams have considerable flexibility in staffing, organization, priority-setting, and operations. The community police teams were originally formed in 1977. Assignments are long term. Although opportunities for rotation are available, many officers work in the same geographical area during their entire career as field officers. Team areas are further subdivided into smaller beats. Officers and supervisors develop a close working knowledge of their team areas and beats, and a sense of ownership due to this long-term assignment.

Problem Resolution Team

The Lincoln Police Department chairs the City of Lincoln Problem Resolution Team. The PRT coordinates the efforts of several city agencies and other organizations to deal with repetitive and intractable problems at properties in Lincoln. By working cooperatively, sharing resources, and exchanging information, the PRT has been very effective at solving chronic neighborhood problems. Cases are nominated to the attention of the Problem Resolution Team by the police department's team commanders, the Mayor's Office, and other agencies. The PRT researches police dispatch records, calls-for-service information, intelligence information, complaint histories held by other agencies, and a variety of other information to design an approach for resolving the problem. The PRT has become an important component of many LPD problem-oriented policing projects.

Generalist Officers

LPD makes judicious use of an unusually small percentage of specialists and detectives. We have adopted a generalist concept of officers, meaning that all officers are expected to take responsibility for complete investigations of the cases they are assigned whenever possible. Uniformed officers conduct extensive follow-up investigation, whereas in many police departments uniformed officers are only responsible for preliminary investigations, after which cases are transferred to detectives. We believe that the street officer is in the best position to identify suspects, maintain contact with victims, and use his or her knowledge of their area and people to bring the cases to a successful conclusion. Thus, the generalist concept is an important adjunct to community policing. Lincoln

consistently maintains a clearance rate in excess of national averages, and we believe that the generalist concept is one reason.

Bike Patrol

A squad of seven officers who patrol on mountain bikes serves Lincoln's downtown area. Bike patrol has all of the advantages of foot patrol—close community contact, excellent visibility, approachability and friendliness—and yet allows officers to respond to police incidents quickly and in a much larger area than officers can handle on foot. Bicycle officers work especially closely with licensed liquor establishments in the downtown area, in order to help control the abuse of alcohol and ensure that laws and regulations pertaining to licensed establishments are well-understood and closely enforced. This approach includes both prevention and enforcement approaches. The work of the bicycle patrol is critical to Lincoln's downtown entertainment hub, because it ensures a feeling of safety for visitors and patrons.

Team Area Citizen Input Committees

Each of the Lincoln Police Department community police teams works with a citizen advisory council. These groups are the mainstay of our efforts to gather and use the input of citizens in our decision-making process. Team commanders and field supervisors meet regularly with the input committees to develop strategies, provide information, and solicit advice on the issues confronting the team area. Citizen input committees are used as a sounding board for department issues, and help teams identify issues of importance to their clients. Many members of citizen input committees are Citizen Police Academy graduates.

Youth Advisory Council

High school students who have participated in Youth Leadership Lincoln are recruited to serve on the department's Youth Advisory Council. The Council meets several times each year to provide feedback to the department on a variety of issues affecting young people. Youth Advisory Council members also assist the department in other ways, including underage tobacco sales enforcement operations

Problem Oriented Policing Projects

Each year, LPD officers complete over 200 problem-oriented policing (POP) projects. Problem-oriented policing is a strategy developed in Newport News, Virginia during the mid-1980's, which seeks to resolve chronic problems by using the resources of the police and other individuals, organizations, or groups to deal with the underlying issues, which are causing the problem. Rather than merely dispatching officers to each incident, POP projects identify the conditions which cause the demand for police services, and are very effective at eliminating these

underlying conditions. POP projects are a major unit of work at LPD, and frequently involve other agencies, citizen groups, and community organizations.

Neighborhood Watch

The Education and Personnel Unit coordinates a Neighborhood Watch program serving over 15,000 households. The department produces written materials, supervises sign installation, and publishes a bimonthly newsletter for Neighborhood Watch members. Police officers conduct initial organizational and training meetings with new groups, and follow-up training upon request. Field officers frequently enlist the assistance of Neighborhood Watch coordinators when conducting canvasses related to specific crimes, or disseminating information about crime patterns in specific neighborhoods.

Business Watch and Realtor Watch

In addition to Neighborhood Watch, the department also sponsors and coordinates the Business Watch program for Lincoln businesses, and sponsors a Realtor Watch program for real estate companies and agents which has been very active. Business Watch groups are organized in commercial areas throughout the city, and provide many of the same services and benefits to businesses that Neighborhood Watch provides for residential customers. The department's Realtor Watch program is jointly sponsored by the Lincoln Board of Realtors, and enlists the assistance of Lincoln's real estate (who are highly mobile, and well-equipped with cellular telephones!) to report suspicious activity. The Realtor Watch board has also sponsored seminars and training sessions for its own membership and the general public.

Crime Prevention Information

Each year, Community Services Unit officers conduct over 600 formal presentations to community organizations, citizen groups, school classes, and business groups on literally scores of topics from baby-sitting safety to fraud prevention. Scores of other presentations are conducted by Team officers and employees. The department also produces an extensive library of publications, and a public-access television series, *LPD Digest*. The department makes much of its information available on the Internet and through a comprehensive annual report.

Triad

Triad is a national community-based crime prevention program developed by the American Association of Retired Persons, International Association of Chiefs of Police, and National Sheriffs' Association. The Lancaster County Sheriff's Office, Lincoln Police Department, and the local chapter of AARP have collaborated to form a Triad program which serves senior citizens in Lincoln and Lancaster County. Triad provides seminars, written materials, and other crime prevention services to seniors. In addition Triad has conducted local research on senior

citizens' perceptions of crime and fear of crime in Lincoln. Along with fulfilling the crime prevention mission, members of the Triad advisory council provide law enforcement officers with feedback and information on a variety of other topics.

Liaison to Community Centers

The department maintains close contact with the Cities four ethnic community centers, the Malone Community Center, Lincoln Indian Center, Hispanic Community Center, and Asian Cultural and Community Center. At present, two of these centers have a police officer serving on their board. Team officers are encouraged to visit the centers on their beats, and specific members of the Community Services Unit staff are also assigned as liaisons to each of the centers. The department uses representatives of the Community Centers as part of its multi-cultural training, and new recruits visit each of the community centers during academy training. From time to time, the department has conducted in-service training at community centers, or sent officers to training sessions sponsored by community centers.

School Resource Officers

Thirteen Lincoln police officers are assigned full time as school resource officers in Lincoln's secondary schools. Four of these officers are assigned to the four public high schools, and four divide responsibility for the nine public middle schools and junior highs. The remaining five serve Lincoln's elementary schools. School resource officers are full-service police officers whose beat is considered to be their school or schools. They provide the full range of police services on their beat, and help to arrange other department resources needed on their beat. They also serve as classroom resources for teachers in a variety of classes. School resources officers are simply team officers who are assigned to a beat consisting of their schools. Team commanders and supervisors meet regularly with their counterparts at the secondary schools.

Gang Strategy

Originally developed and published in 1994, the Lincoln Police Department gang strategy, *Gangs in Lincoln: A Strategy for Prevention and Response*, was extensively revised in 1996, with considerable input from the public. Over 120 citizens participated in a forum to both learn about gangs and provide input into our strategy. One of the few written police gang strategies in existence, the LPD strategy outlines our past efforts and our current initiatives, and our future plans for controlling gang activity. During 1997, LPD participated as a key player in a community-wide effort to develop a similar community gang strategy, which was published early in the year. The LPD gang strategy focuses on collaboration with the community to prevent gang involvement and respond to gang activity. It is not merely occupying space on bookshelves. The action items identified in the strategy have been implemented or are being actively pursued by the department.

Quality Service Audit

In conjunction with the Gallup Organization, LPD conducts survey research that provides officers with timely feedback from the citizens they actually served. Over 6,500 telephone surveys are completed annually by the department—the vast majority by unpaid university interns and volunteers. Officers receive both data and narrative comments from citizens, and training from Gallup which assists them in interpreting the results and using the information to improve their performance. The Quality Service Audit has received national recognition, and is truly a cutting edge practice in community-based policing.

Youth Diversion

The police department's Family Crimes Unit coordinates a diversion project for children under the age of 12 who have committed illegal acts. The Unit diverts most first-time nonviolent offenders by entering into an agreement with the youth and his or her parents. These agreements typically require the youth to make restitution, tender a personal apology to the victim, and perform community service or personalized project. An important goal of the diversion program is to support parents in establishing appropriate consequences.

Truancy and Gang Intervention Projects

The Family Crimes Unit is also involved in two other important programs to reduce truancy and gang involvement. The Unit works closely with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services and County Attorney to intervene with families of chronically truant children. Officers assigned to the Unit also proactively contact parents or guardians of youths who come to the department's attention due to gang involvement, in order to provide information and resources to these parents and guardians.

Community Policing Substations

Each of the department's five community police teams maintains substations within Lincoln neighborhoods. These range from the extensive Center Team Station, a full service facility, to small storefronts such as the Northeast Team's University Place substation. Many substations are strategically located to enhance citizens' perceptions and safety and improve the visibility of officers in neighborhoods. Substations at a library, school, recreation center, hospital, shopping center, drug treatment center, and a family resource center not only provide convenient office space for officers to use, but also maximize contact with clients of these facilities, and the general public. These substations are used constantly throughout the day by team officers as a substation for preparing reports, and accessing the department's computer databases.

Citizen Police Academy

Since 1992, the Lincoln Police Department has conducted two Citizen Police Academies each year. The Academy is a series of evening seminars conducted one night each week for 10 weeks, during which 25-30 participants learn about policing and the Lincoln Police Department. Classes cover topics such as building searches, bicycle patrol, traffic stops, internal affairs, community-based policing, and many others. Citizens also take part in a ride along with an officer for a patrol shift during the Academy—a highlight for participants. The Citizen Police Academy builds bridges between the department and the public we serve, and many graduates go on to serve as department volunteers.

Citizen Police Advisory Board

Created by municipal ordinance in 1975, Lincoln has one of the most long standing citizen review processes in the United States. Seven citizens appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the city council receive complaints from citizens about police officers' performance or department policies. The board uses an informal hearing process to resolve complaints whenever possible, and may make recommendations to the mayor, police chief, and city council. Most board members participate in the Lincoln Police Department Citizen Police Academy. The department's Internal Affairs Unit works closely with the board to provide information and investigative support.

School Safety Committee

The Lincoln Police Department and Lincoln Public Schools staff a joint School Safety Committee which coordinates school safety activities throughout the city, and makes policy recommendations to the superintendent of schools and police chief. LPD enjoys an unusually close working relationship with over 70 elementary and secondary schools in the city. Department managers meet frequently with principals and staffs, and the two organizations share many resources. During the past several years, LPD has increasingly produced joint training for school and police personnel on topics relating to safety, youth violence, and gang activity.

College Internships

Each semester, 10 to 15 students from area colleges and universities work as interns in many of the department's operational units. Interns provide support to many of the department's commanders, conduct Quality Service Audit interviews, assist in the department's training academy, and participate in ride-alongs with patrol officers. Interns receive college credit for their work, valuable job experience and training, and the department benefits immensely from the work they perform. Our active internship program has been particularly valuable in creating and sustaining a close relationship with the University of Nebraska Criminal Justice Department, which is a major source of interns. Many interns eventually apply for civilian and sworn positions with the department.

Volunteer Program

Each year, over 10,000 hours of volunteer work are contributed by the department's extensive network of volunteers. A full-time volunteer coordinator organizes the recruitment and assignment of over 60 volunteers who fulfill a variety of jobs within the department. Volunteers' assignments include such diverse duties as maintaining contact with crime victims, producing publications, photographing fatality traffic accident scenes, conducting research, responding to telephone inquiries, and providing clerical support to department managers. Many volunteers are former participants in the Citizen Police Academy. Volunteer involvement not only provides us with extremely valuable personnel resources, but the program also solidifies closer relationships with citizens.

Youth Recreation Programs

The Lincoln Police Department sponsors a variety of programs for young people, aimed and providing positive activities for youth. Each summer, the department conducts a summer camp for disadvantaged kids who are nominated by police officers throughout the year. Many of these youths have never had a camping experience, and would be unable to do so without the support of the department. Lincoln police officers and civilian employees serve as counselors and staff at the camp. LPD also sponsors four Midget Football teams in northwest and north-central Lincoln. Over 100 youths participate on the LPD Midget Football teams, coached by police officers and volunteers. Because Midget Football teams are organized geographically, a high percentage of participants on LPD's Midget Football teams are low-income and minority children. In conjunction with the Lincoln Police Union, the department sponsors an Explorer Post as part of the exploring program of the Boy Scouts of America. The department also sponsors the Southeast Asian Youth Club, which conducts a variety of activities for Asian-American kids in Lincoln. In addition to these major activities, LPD participates in innumerable short-term events and projects for kids in Lincoln on a regular basis throughout the year.

Services to Non-English Speaking Populations

Working with individual community members and ethnic community centers such as the Asian Cultural and Community Center, the department provides a host of services for residents who do not speak English as their primary language. The most common foreign languages spoken in Lincoln, Spanish and Vietnamese, are the focus of these services. In addition to our own resources of several bilingual officers An active interpreters program is coordinated by the department to make interpreters available to officers on the street when needed in virtually all languages encountered in the city. Most of the department's publications are available in Spanish and Vietnamese, in addition to English. The department's Internet site also contains information in Spanish and Vietnamese. The department has produced several bilingual videos concerning various topics for broadcast on public-access cable television, available for loan from the

department. LPD employees conduct training sessions for new immigrants concerning a number of topics, as part of our outreach to refugees, and we are one of only a handful of law enforcement agencies in a multi-state area that has qualified as an authorized site for fingerprinting required by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, a vital service for hundreds of immigrants. LPD also provides TDD service to the deaf and hearing impaired at our primary telephone answering points, and ASL interpreters are available on our staff and through our pool of interpreters in the community. Closed-captioning is now available for our public television programs.

Victim-Witness Services

A vital part of community-based policing is attending to the needs of victims and witness of crime. LPD's award-winning Victim/Witness Unit is staffed with full and part-time employees and volunteer who assist victims and witnesses in understanding the criminal justice process, participating in hearings and trials, and accessing the support services they need. The Victim/Witness Unit provides cellular telephones on loan to victims of domestic abuse, assists applicants in obtaining protection orders, clients, helps officers and investigations and trials, and performs many other roles helping to maximize our support and assistance to victims and witnesses.

Internet Resources

An extensive Internet site is maintained the department. The department's Internet resources offer landlords, community associations, teachers, students, and other citizens quick access to information on topics such as community-based policing, crime statistics, crime prevention, calls-for-service data, employee information, problem-oriented policing projects, and much more. Department publications such as *The Lincoln Police Department Annual Report*, *Information for Protection Order Applicants*, and *Home Security Inspection Checklist* are available for downloading in Adobe's portable document format (.pdf), making these publications available for wide distribution. In addition, citizens may email the department, complete applications for the Citizen Police Academy, complete a pre-application for employment, and take part in the Quality Service Audit. The department provides extensive on-line information about current criminal incidents, calls for service, wanted persons, and stolen property, as well as a cutting-edge interactive crime mapping application. LPD was the first police department in the United States to offer copies accident reports on the Internet, and one of only a handful of law enforcement agencies in the country providing on-line criminal history checks.

Crimestoppers

Lincoln's Crimestoppers program is sponsored by the police department, and overseen by a volunteer board of directors primarily composed of citizen representatives. Crimestoppers seeks to involve citizens in the investigation and clearance of crimes, by providing a system for receiving confidential and anonymous tips, and offering rewards for information that leads to arrests. Not only does Crimestoppers involve the general public more frequently in providing key information in criminal cases, but it also establishes a partnership between the department and Lincoln's business community, which is the contributor base for the program, and participates actively on the board. In addition, Lincoln now has a Student Crimestoppers program organized in Lincoln's high schools, and high school representatives from each school serve with the board of directors. To date, Crimestoppers has received 13,000 calls, resulting in 4,500 cases solved, 2,700 arrests, and the recovery of stolen property and contraband valued at \$5.9 million.

ACUDAT

The Lincoln, Nebraska Police Department makes extensive use of crime and incident mapping in the context of community-based policing. LPD's geographic information system and geographic crime analysis process is known as ACUDAT, an acronym for Analyzing Crime Using Data About Trends. The department uses mapping to identify trends amenable to problem-oriented policing projects and to assess the results of these projects. Like many departments, Lincoln conducts regular internal staff meeting reviews of mapped crime trends. Rather than being used strictly as a means of holding commanders accountable, Lincoln's version is aimed at informing field personnel—street sergeants, detectives, investigators, and officers—of the current trends occurring in their areas. Public distribution of mapping products is a significant part of the department's community policing strategy. The department makes use of the Internet to distribute interactive maps and data to the general public and neighborhood organizations, generating over 80,000 hits monthly on its web site.

Community-Based Policing to Combat Domestic Violence

In 1996, LPD initiated Community-Based Policing to Combat Domestic Violence, a project which seeks to improve the department's response to our most serious violent crime problem by working in collaboration with other community organizations involved in efforts to respond to domestic violence in Lincoln. Working with the Family Violence Council, the Domestic Violence Coalition, County Attorney's Office, Friendship Home shelter for victims, and Rape/Spouse Crises Center, the department has engaged in a comprehensive effort to respond more effectively to domestic violence. Major efforts have included enhanced data collection, officer training, increased access to victim advocacy, and perhaps most importantly, a case coordination team which meets weekly to coordinate the work of all organizations on individual domestic violence cases.

Child Abuse/Neglect Investigation Team

The department is one of the primary members of an multi-disciplinary team which coordinates the investigation and follow-up on child abuse and neglect cases in Lancaster County. The Lancaster County Child Abuse/Neglect Investigation Team also includes the Lancaster County Sheriff's Office, Lancaster County Attorney's Office, Lancaster County Health Department, Lincoln Public Schools, and members representing Lincoln's hospitals. The department works cooperatively to provide the best possible response to over 3,000 cases of potential abuse and neglect which it investigates each year.

Recruitment and Selection for Community-Based Policing

In cooperation with the Gallup Organization, LPD has implemented special recruitment and selection techniques aimed at attracting and identifying candidates who will perform well in an organization committed to the principles of community-based policing. The LPD Perceiver Interview was created for this purpose in 1993, after research was completed on the traits and qualities that typified our most outstanding community-based police officers. Subsequent research has shown a strong correlation between scores on this instrument and the actual performance of officers in the community. These correlations relate to a number of dimensions of performance, most importantly the expressed satisfaction of citizens who are actually served by the officer. As part of the work on selection for community-based policing, the department also implemented print ads that were specifically designed to appeal to candidates who are attracted to our community-based policing philosophy.

Community-Based Policing Training

All Lincoln police officers participate in a regular curriculum of community-based policing training. This training is conducted both as part of the pre-service academy instruction, and as in-service training for experienced officers. Community-based policing training has covered such topics and issues as cultural awareness, foreign language, designing and implementing problem-oriented policing projects, and many other topics. Lincoln's ethnic community centers frequently assist in training, along with other community resources. In addition, some officers attend regional or national seminars and conferences as budget resources permit. Lincoln police officers also conduct community-based policing training for other agencies and organizations. The department has sponsored a regional conference on community-based policing, instructed by our own personnel, entitled Community-Based Policing Projects To Go.

Crime-Free Multi-Housing

The Crime-Free Multi-Housing program is a national program designed as a partnership between the police department and rental property managers, in order to help tenants, owners, and managers keep criminal activity out of multiple-unit housing. The program includes seminars for owners and managers, on-site security surveys and technical assistance, and tenant crime prevention

meetings. Seminars, meetings, and materials are presented by the Lincoln Police Department Community Services Unit. Properties that successfully complete the three phases of the program are certified as meeting program security requirements to ensure tenant safety, and are eligible to obtain Crime-Free Multi-Housing signs from the police department, and to use the copyrighted logo. The program has been very positively received by owners and tenants alike.